MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS™

CLAN DESTINE™ VENGEANCE™ SHANG CHI™ NEW WARRIORS™

ALAN DAVIS
MARK FARMER

MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS

RICHARD ASHFORD EDITOR
MICHAEL KRAIGER ASSISTANT EDITOR
RALPH MACCHIO GROUP EDITOR
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COVER BY ALAN DAVIS

CLAN DESTINE

"SCARE TACTICS"

WRITER .....ALAN DAVIS
PENCILS.....ALAN DAVIS
INKS .....MARK FARMER
LETTERS .....PAT PRENTICE
COLORS .....SOPHIE HEATH

Meet the strangest family of all time! A MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS preview of the upcoming HOT new series.

KYMAERA

A NEW WARRIORS SOLO
PART 4 OF 4
"REVERSAL OF FORTUNE"

WRITER .....ED LAZELLARI
PENCILS .....ED LAZELLARI
INKS .....JOE ROSAS
LETTERS .....ED LAZELLARI
COLORS .....ED LAZELLARI

Kymaera turns the tide in the final part of this New Warriors solo adventure.

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MARVEL READERS PRESENT

C/O 387 PARK AVENUE SOUTH, NEW YORK, NY, 10016

Dear Richard and Michael,

RE: MCP #152:

Covers: Vengeance looked good, but backgrounds could have enhanced it. Wolverine should have been declawed, and Tom Grindberg's art always hurts my eyes.

Wolverine: Logan as a" normal man" is boring. I like Paul Ryan's art. The villain looked impressive but needs a name to match.

War Machine: Would have liked to see the Hate Monger story resolved in his own title. I've always liked Len's "Iron Works", and the Czop/Dzon was Gzood!

Vengeance: I'm still uncomfortable with the She-Hulk, Spider-Woman and U S Agent, so I haven't warmed up to this Ghost Rider clone yet (why must Marvel create these blatant copycats? To me, it makes the originals, less original), but the story and art were good. The Big Game Posse seems more suited to hunting Super-Humans, rather than blowing up a police woman.

Moon Knight: I've always disliked inventory issues. What is the point of giving exposure to a character who's just died? (ironic how he became so popular when he went "SPLAT", hmm?)

As is usually the case, I like bits and pieces of the issue, but over all it was unsatisfying.

I would love for this book to have the "feel" to it, that the old MARVEL TEAM-UP, MARVEL TWO-IN-ONE, MARVEL PREMIERE, and MARVEL SPOTLIGHT had. (heck, I even loved the old MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS. remember? with Bloodstone and The Guardians of the Galaxy). Those books were so exciting to me as a kid, and always firmly entrenched in the Marvel universe.

MCP doesn't have that "feel" to it. It seems disjointed and unsure of itself. is it an anthology? a showcase? a team-up book?

I'm glad that changes are being made, but don't just be happy with the superficial ones. The biggest problem I can see is format. Either make the book longer with more pages, or keep it to one or two stories an issue. A good story takes time to tell. Eight pages is not sufficient time even when spread out over four issues. Would you want to see a two hour movie in thirty minute installments? I wouldn't. That would seriously detract from the overall whole. Other than the Weapon X storyline, and possibly the recent Midnight Sons crossover almost every other storyline has been entirely forgetiable. Never mind being more connected to the Marvel Universe, this book needs to be more connected to itself. Use the previous title I mentioned as examples. See how smoothly they seem to flow from one issue to another, even if the stories weren't connected.

Maybe you're trying to cram too much stuff into this book. I really think four eight-page stories is too much, as well as too little.Thanks for listening!

Michael Rose
411 Bedford St.
Lexington, Ma 02173

We really appreciate the time you've taken to write us, Michael; we are always tossing ideas around, trying to make MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS a better book, and some of the ideas mentioned in your letter come up now and again. We will point out that it is our belief that a good story can be told in eight pages. If you look to Will Eisner's SPIRIT, the old E C comics and Stan Lee's early work we think you'll agree.

MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS PROUDLY INTRODUCES THE STRANGEST FAMILY OF ALL TIME...
CLANDESTINE
SCARE TACTICS
CHAAAARGE!!
CREATED BY ALAN DAVIS

WANG
VAM
SKRNK

BOP
THOK
SKRRRKK!!

fash
FLKK
SKRUK
SPIK
SPAK

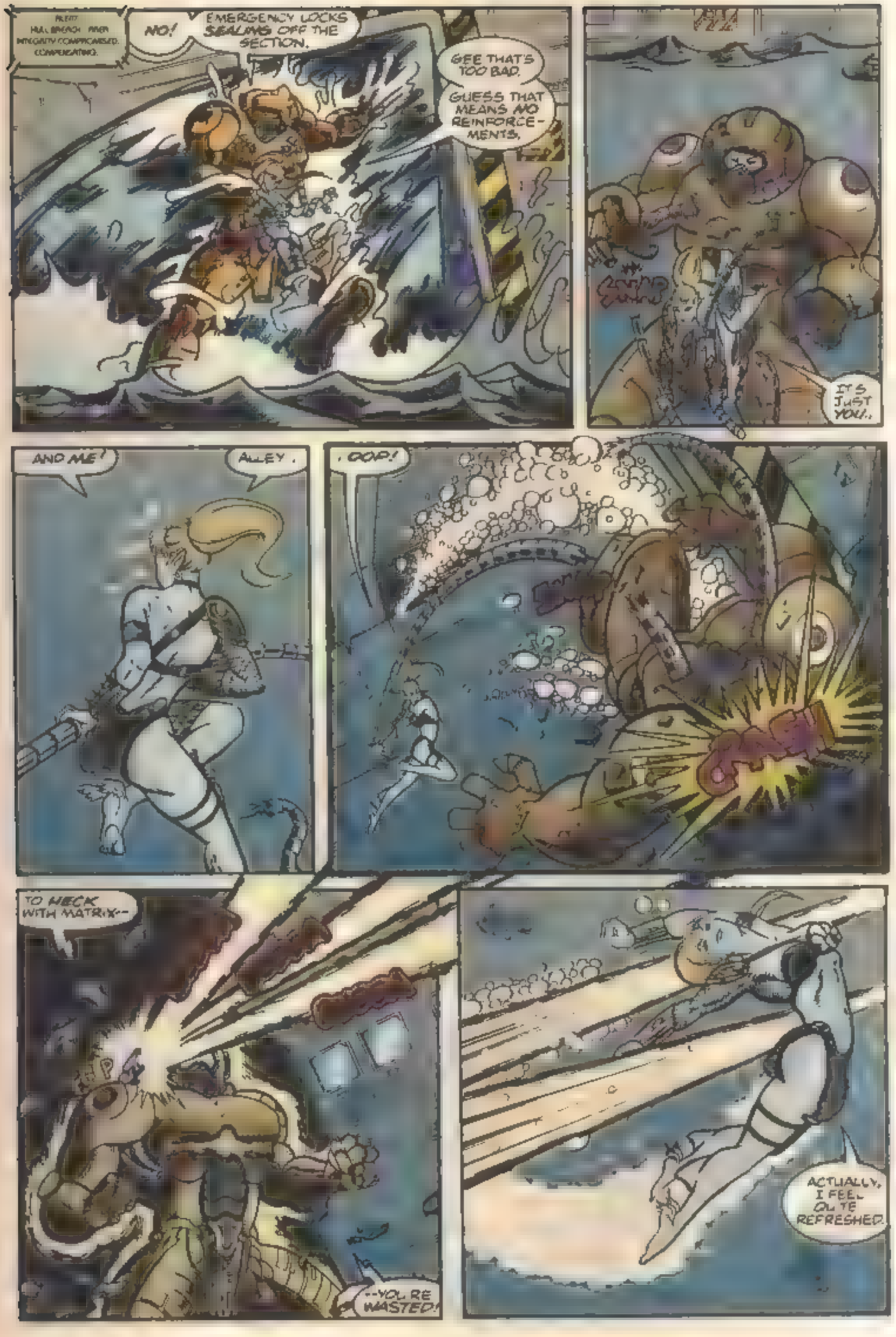
HEY! WALTER...
...TAKE IT EASY WITH THE SHRAPNEL WE'RE ON YOUR SIDE.
I KNEW YOU TWO WEREN'T UP TO THIS -- IF YOU CAN'T STAND THE HEAT... LEAVE!
THAT'S WHAT YOU WANT, ISN'T IT!
WE'RE NOT GOING... WE'RE READY FOR ANYTHING!
ACME
ROBOT CONTROL UNIT
ANYTHING?
WE'LL SOON SEE ABOUT THAT.
YOIKES!?
THOOM
GET BEHIND ME, PANDORA. I'LL TAKE CARE OF THIS.

NO, RORY. I CAN MANAGE.
REMEMBER WHAT DOMINIC TAUGHT US.
ZAK
AN ENEMY WHO CAN'T STAND, CAN'T FIGHT.
NICE ONE, SIS.
TIM-BER...
IT WILL!
...ER, IT'S NOT FALLING, PANDORA.
BUT WHICH WAY?
AWAY FROM US...?
NO! TO OUR RIGHT...
...OUR LEFT!
OH NO!

KRRRRM!
NO!...
...RORY... PANDORA...
...THEY'VE BEEN CRUSHED--
--NEWTON. YOU SAID THIS WAS SAFE!
I... I...
ZAK
YOU'RE ALIVE!
OF COURSE, WALLY. WE CAN TAKE CARE OF OURSELVES.
THIS TRAINING SESSION WAS A BRILLIANT IDEA, WALTER.

YEAH, THIS WAS FUN, BIG GUY. REALLY EXCITING. LET'S DO IT AGAIN.
BUT MAYBE NEXT TIME YOU COULD BUILD BIGGER ROBOTS, NEWTON...
...WITH CHAIN SAWS.
BIGGER... WITH CHAIN SAWS.
ANYWAY, WE HAVE A PILE OF REVISION FOR OUR END OF TERM EXAMS.
CALL US WHEN IT'S TIME FOR OUR CRIME-FIGHTING PATROL.
YOUR PLAN DIDN'T WORK, WALTER.
THEY WEREN'T SCARED.
THEY ENJOYED IT.
THEY STILL WANT TO BE SUPER HEROES.
THIS IS BAD... VERY BAD.
THE PUBLIC IS BOUND TO FIND OUT ABOUT US!
THE END
FOR NOW...
WATCH FOR CLAN DESTINE IN THEIR OWN BOOK, LATER THIS SUMMER!

SORRY CHICKIE. IF I LET YA GET TO THAT LEVER, YA'LL FLOOD THE WHOLE COMPARTMENT WITH OCEAN WATER.
THAT'S THE POINT. IF I DON'T GET TO THAT LEVER, I'M DONE FOR.
MY ARMS ARE PINNED-- IF I CAN JUST REACH OVER WITH MY...
OF
FORTUNE
NEW WARRIORS SOLO
GOT IT!
K-THUNK


ALERT! HULL BREACH. INTEGRITY COMPROMISED. COMPENSATING.
NO!
EMERGENCY LOCKS SEALING OFF THE SECTION.
GEE THAT'S TOO BAD.
GUESS THAT MEANS NO REINFORCE-MENTS.
SKRK
IT'S JUST YOU!..
AND ME!
ALLEY.
OOP!
TO HECK WITH MATRIX--
--YOU'RE WASTED!
ACTUALLY, I FEEL QUITE REFRESHED.

I HAVE HAD ENOUGH..
OH NOOO-
..OF YOU!
KPOW
KA-THUNK
THOSE BUBBLES..
SSSSSS
HIS AIR SUPPLY'S BEEN DAMAGED
I'VE GOT TO GET HIM TO THE SURFACE BEFORE HE DROWNS

SLASH
COFF! YOU SAVED MY LIFE! EVEN AFTER YOU KNEW WHAT WE MEANT TO DO?
I'M FUNNY THAT WAY LET'S JUST SAY YOU OWE ME STAY HERE
YOU'RE NOT GOING BACK? YOU GOT AWAY, BEAT IT!
IF YOU GO BACK AND YOU LOSE.
MATRIX IS A BRILLIANT GENETICIST I THINK SHE CAN CHANGE ME BACK TO THE WAY I WAS.
SHE SAID MY DNA IS MALLEABLE BECAUSE THE MUTATION HAPPENED RECENTLY I'LL LOSE MY WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY IF SHE GETS AWAY. THIS IS A RISK I HAVE TO TAKE! I WON'T LOSE!
MATRIX, I'VE GOT SOMETHING ON SONAR BEARING TOWARDS US BUT IT IS TOO SMALL TO BE A SHIP...
THAT'S BECAUSE IT'S KYMAERA YOU FOOL! EVASIVE MANEUVERS NOW!
ZANDRIFF READY THE ESCAPE CRAFT. BE QUICK AND DISCREET
THAT ATLANTEAN WENCH CAN OUTRUN US WITH ONE LEG IF SHE CHOSE WE'RE IN HER ELEMENT--BEST NOT TO TAKE CHANCES

WHAT ON EARTH!
IF I PULL DOWN ON THE STERN—
--THEIR OWN PROPULSION WILL HELP ME PUSH THEM TO THE SURFACE
WHAT'S HAPPENING?
SHE'S GOT CONTROL OF THE RUDDER AND SHE'S FORCING US UP!
"I CAN'T DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT!
SSSSSSSSSS
HUH?
YOU AND THE CREW HAVE SERVED ME WELL, O'DONALD
CLICK
ZANDROFF THE TIMER IS SET BE READY FOR IMMEDIATE DEPARTURE
UNDERSTOOD
AAGGH!
YOU CAN DO SO ONE LAST TIME AS DECOYS.

KA-BOOM!!
GREAT NEPTUNE THE SUB.
THAT ESCAPE CRAFT' MATRIX AND ZANDROFF ARE TRYING TO ESCAPE.
I HAVE TO GO AFTER THEM BUT
MORE EXPLOSIONS!
THE SUB'S CRIPPLED HER CREW WILL DROWN.
BOOM

EVERY INSTINCT IN ME IS CRYING OUT TO GO AFTER THEM-- BUT I DON'T REALLY HAVE A CHOICE..
I CAN'T GET TO THE BRIDGE.
THERE SHOULD BE A VIDEO LINK SOMEWH-- BINGO!
MATRIX WILL HAVE TO WAIT, THERE'S NO TELLING HOW MANY MEN ARE TRAPPED IN HERE
YEAH O'DONALD, SECOND MATE HAVE YA COME BACK TA' GLOAT?
IS ANYONE ALIVE UP THERE
DON'T PUSH ME BJO. I'M HERE TO HELP
NO ONE CAN HELP US NOW DOLL. I'VE BLOWN THE TANKS BUT THE SCREWS ARE OUT AND WE'VE TAKEN ON TOO MUCH WATER TO JUST FLOAT UP.
THAT @#%&! WITCH
DON'T GIVE UP YET O'DONALD
"THOSE BOMBS COULD HAVE BEEN SET OFF IN MORE CRUCIAL AREAS."
SHE JUST WANTS TO DELAY ME
THERE'S ENOUGH BUOYANCY IN THIS TUB FOR ME TO PUSH IT UP.
I HOPE MY CHIROPRACTOR ISN'T ON VACATION.
SHADOWS ON THE SURFACE COULD IT BE THE SHIPS I'M WAITING FOR?

SIR SONAR SHOWS ACTIVITY JUST OFF THE PORT BOW A SUBMARINE THREE HUNDRED FATHOMS--
HELM, TEN DEGREES TO PORT SOMEBODY GET MY FIELD GLASSES
--TWO HUNDRED IT'S COMING UP FAST SIR.
HAVE SECURITY REPORT TO THE BOW PREPARE TO COME ALONG SIDE
4
FASHOOOM
GOOD GOD.
LATER OVER A CUP OF COFFEE.
WE CAN'T FIND HER ESCAPE CRAFT ON SONAR MS PRENTICE I'M SORRY BUT SHE'S GONE.
GONE? YOU'RE NOT GONNA QUIT...?
I I'M SORRY DIDN'T MEAN TO SNAP AT YOU.
I'M SURE YOU DID YOUR BEST IT'S JUST--
--I'M LOSING ALL HOPE THAT I'LL EVER BE THE WAY I WAS AGAIN
END

MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS
MARVEL
MIDNIGHT SONS
158
VENGEANCE CLAN DESTINE™
SHANG CHI NEW WARRIORS
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TOM DEFALCO EDITOR IN CHIEF

COVER BY REGGIE JONES

VENGEANCE

ALTERED SPIRITS
PART 3 OF 4
"FIRE AND BLOOD"

WRITER .....CHRIS COOPER
BREAKDOWNS..... .....REGGIE JONES
FINISHES . . . FRED HARPER
LETTERS . .. .. UL HIGGINS
COLORS . . GEORGE ROUSSOS

Badi mo, free of the spirit of Vengeance, wonders what can be done to stop the rampaging terror of Phantomel

SHANG CHI

MASTER OF MARTIAL ARTS
"THE GAUNTLET"
PART 3 OF 3

WRITER . .. . .KARL BOLLERS
PENCILS . . CARY NORD
INKS . ... BAMBOS GORGIO
LETTERS UL HIGGINS
COLORS . . . ASHLEY POSELLA

After fighting Lazarus, Shang Chi finds the kidnapped Lieko Wu and reaches the end of the Gauntlet!

FROM RICHARD AND MICHAEL

This is a RUSH! I need it right away! These nine words are probably repeated dozens of times in the course of a single day here at Marvel. and the two fellows who hear those words the most are Robert (Robbie) Carosella and Jesus (Whitey) Gonzalez. These two guys have probably seen more original artwork than anyone else here at Marvel. They are the photostat department. A photostat (or stat) is a black line photograph of artwork or type; these stats can enlarge or reduce an image In putting together a comic book for publication the need for stats is endless, stats are used for the title on each cover, logos, letters pages, making art corrections etc,etc. Robbie, who has worked here for over fifteen years and also coaches our softball team, and Whitey who started here in 1987 and pitches and plays shortstop on the team, are the ones who do the work to produce hundreds of stats each day. They are two people whose names don't appear in the credits but whose work is vital to the production of Marvel Comics. Thanks fellas.

heading to the stat room,
Richard and Michael

MARVEL READERS PRESENT

C/O 387 PARK AVENUE SOUTH, NEW YORK, NY, 10016

Dear Marvel Readers Presents,

I'd first like to congratulate you guys for doing a great job on improving and bringing back the best parts of this excellent comic. I'd also like to ask about three questions I'm in the dark about

1.) Since when did John Blaze start wearing the mask on the side of his face?
2.) Who killed Ghost Rider?
3.) In what issue of what comic did it happen?

Thanks for everything and keep up the good work.

Jeremy Apodaca
(address withheld by request)

Jeremy, John Blaze started wearing the mask after SPIRITS OF VENGEANCE #15. As to who killed Ghost Rider, I think if you read Spirits of Vengeance issue # 18 you'll find your question answered.

Dear Marvel Readers Presents,

I love Wolverine's costume in MCP #150! Is it permanent? Keep it around for a while. I think it will be a big hit! I do like your comic, but I noticed in back issues you have stories about the new mutants (ie, Sunspot, Warlock Mirage and Wolfsbane): Why not Magik? Now that she's dead, we won't be seeing her as much as we like. Why not have a three or four issue run? Maybe have Belasco resurrect Illyana or have the new ruler of Limbo (seen in EXCALIBUR) take on S'ym, Belasco,and Darkchilde. That would work. come on, try it, you'll like it.

Chip Wentworth
19 Smith St. Apt 2
Fryeburg, ME 04037

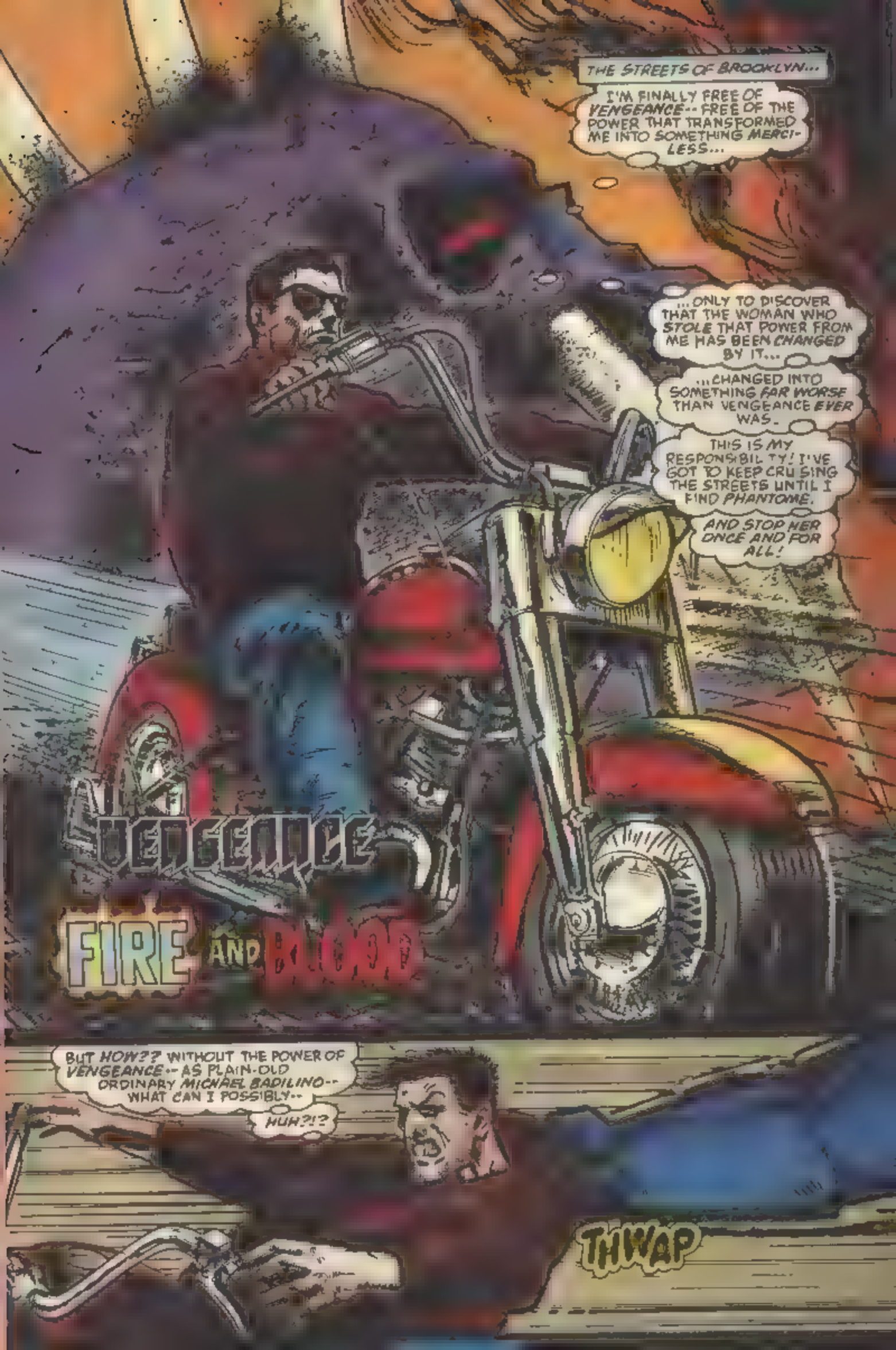
Thanks for your letter Chip, to answer your question, no Wolverine s costume in MCP #150 is not permanent. It was just something he threw on for that special appearance. As to your suggestions for the New Mutant stories (fine suggestions may we add), we hope you won't be too disappointed because the New Mutants probably won't be showing up in MArvel Comics Presents for some time. The reason being that we are working to tell better stories, more complete, in that the stories are just not a toss off, making little difference in the character or continuity. Therein lies the rub. The New Mutants are part of the X-Men continuity as well as that of the entire Marvel universe, and with all the different X-Men titles it is often difficult to keep within the continuity when characters make appearances in different titles

Dear Sir,

I have been reading your comics for a long time I like your comics a lot. My favorite issues were with Weapon X. I think your company should keep on making comics for a long time.

Danny Lyons
109 Queensbury Circle
Goose Creek, SC 29445

Thanks for writing, Danny. With the support of readers like you. Marvel will be in the business of making fine comic books for many years to come


THE STREETS OF BROOKLYN...
I'M FINALLY FREE OF VENGEANCE-- FREE OF THE POWER THAT TRANSFORMED ME INTO SOMETHING MERCILESS...
...ONLY TO DISCOVER THAT THE WOMAN WHO STOLE THAT POWER FROM ME HAS BEEN CHANGED BY IT...
...CHANGED INTO SOMETHING FAR WORSE THAN VENGEANCE EVER WAS.
THIS IS MY RESPONSIBILITY! I'VE GOT TO KEEP CRUISING THE STREETS UNTIL I FIND PHANTOME.
AND STOP HER ONCE AND FOR ALL!
VENGEANCE
FIRE AND BLOOD
BUT HOW?!? WITHOUT THE POWER OF VENGEANCE-- AS PLAIN-OLD ORDINARY MICHAEL BADILINO-- WHAT CAN I POSSIBLY--
HUH?!?
THWAP

GARGANTUA!!
AT LEAST THAT'S WHAT PHANTOME CALLED HIM. AND IF HER ALLY IS HERE, THEN THE LADY HERSELF CAN'T BE FAR.
NOW I JUST HAVE TO GET PAST HIM WITHOUT GETTING MYSELF KILLED--NO PROBLEM WHEN I WAS VENGEANCE, BUT NOW...?
YOU-- YOU'S THE ONE THAT WAS VENGEANCE, BEFORE THE BOSS ZAPPED YA! I GOTCHA NOW!
SO PHANTOME SENT YOU TO DO HER DIRTY WORK, EH?
WELL, YOU'RE NOT TAKING ME DOWN WITHOUT A FIGHT!
I DON'T FIND YA SO WE COULD FIGHT--
I FOUND YA SO YOU COULD HELP--HELP ME, HELP THE BOSS!
WHAT?! ME, HELP PHANTOME??
DON'CHA SEE, SOMETHING'S GONE WRONG! SHE AIN'T CRAZY LIKE THAT, HURTIN' PEOPLE FOR NO GOOD REASON--
--AT LEAST, SHE WASN'T, UNTIL SHE GOT A HOLD OF YOUR POWERS SHE JUST WANTED CONTROL OVER HER OWN LIFE!
GUYS BEEN TELLIN' HER WHAT TO DO AND WHO TO BE SINCE... SINCE FOREVER. SHE WANTED THE POWER TO DO AS SHE PLEASED!
SHE'S NOT EVIL HONEST! YA GOTTA FIX THINGS, MAKE HER LIKE SHE WAS--!
CALM DOWN, FELLA-- I'LL HELP...
BUT YOU'VE GOT TO TELL ME HOW TO FIND HER!

THE ABANDONED PIERS OF THE OLD BROOKLYN NAVY YARD...
...WHERE THOSE WITHOUT ANYPLACE ELSE TO CALL HOME HAVE A COMMUNITY OF SORTS...
...A COMMUNITY THAT'S ABOUT TO BE SHATTERED BY PHANTOME!
I USED TO LOOK AT YOU FOLKS AND FEEL SORRY FOR YOU--
--AND MAYBE EVEN WISHED YOU WOULD GO AWAY, SO I WOULDN'T HAVE TO LOOK AND FEEL SORRY ANYMORE.
BUT NOW I CAN MAKE YOU GO AWAY-- PERMANENTLY!
BOBBY RAY-- GET TO THE WAREHOUSES! WARN THE OTHERS!
MAN-OH-MAN I KNEW THAT NEW MAYOR WAS BAD NEWS FOR US HOMELESS!

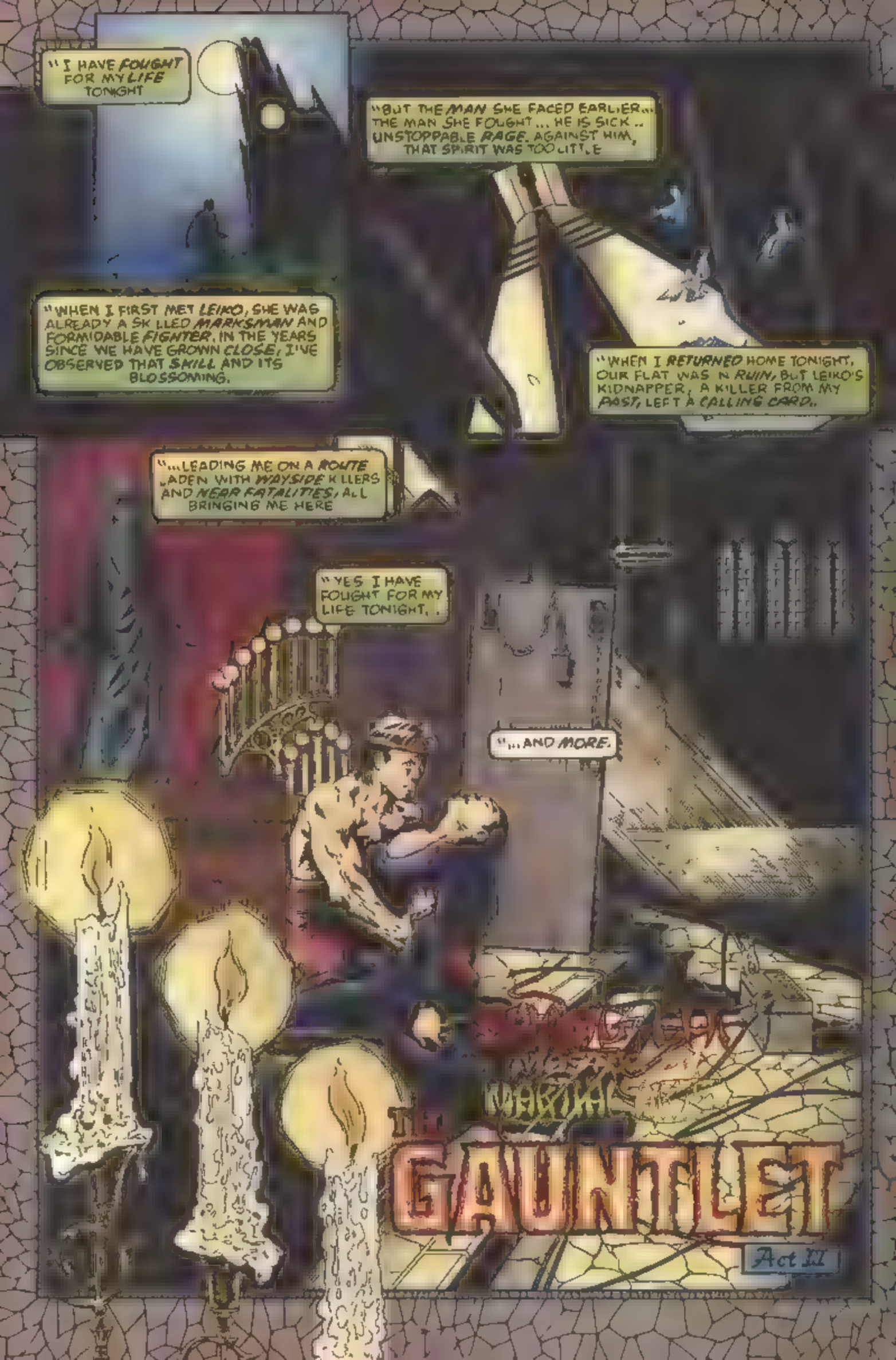
GOING SOMEWHERE, BOBBY RAY?
I THINK NOT...
DUH
EXCEPT PERHAPS, INTO MY WAITING ARMS!
NOW I KNOW YOU'RE BURNING WITH DESIRE FOR ME...
...SO MY HELLFIRE KISS IS DEFINITELY THE WAY TO GO!
RELAX, BOBBY RAY YOU'RE NOT THE FIRST MAN TO MELT IN MY ARMS..
GLMMMMPH.
... AND YOU CERTAINLY WON'T BE THE LAST!
STOP IT!
OH YOU AGAIN

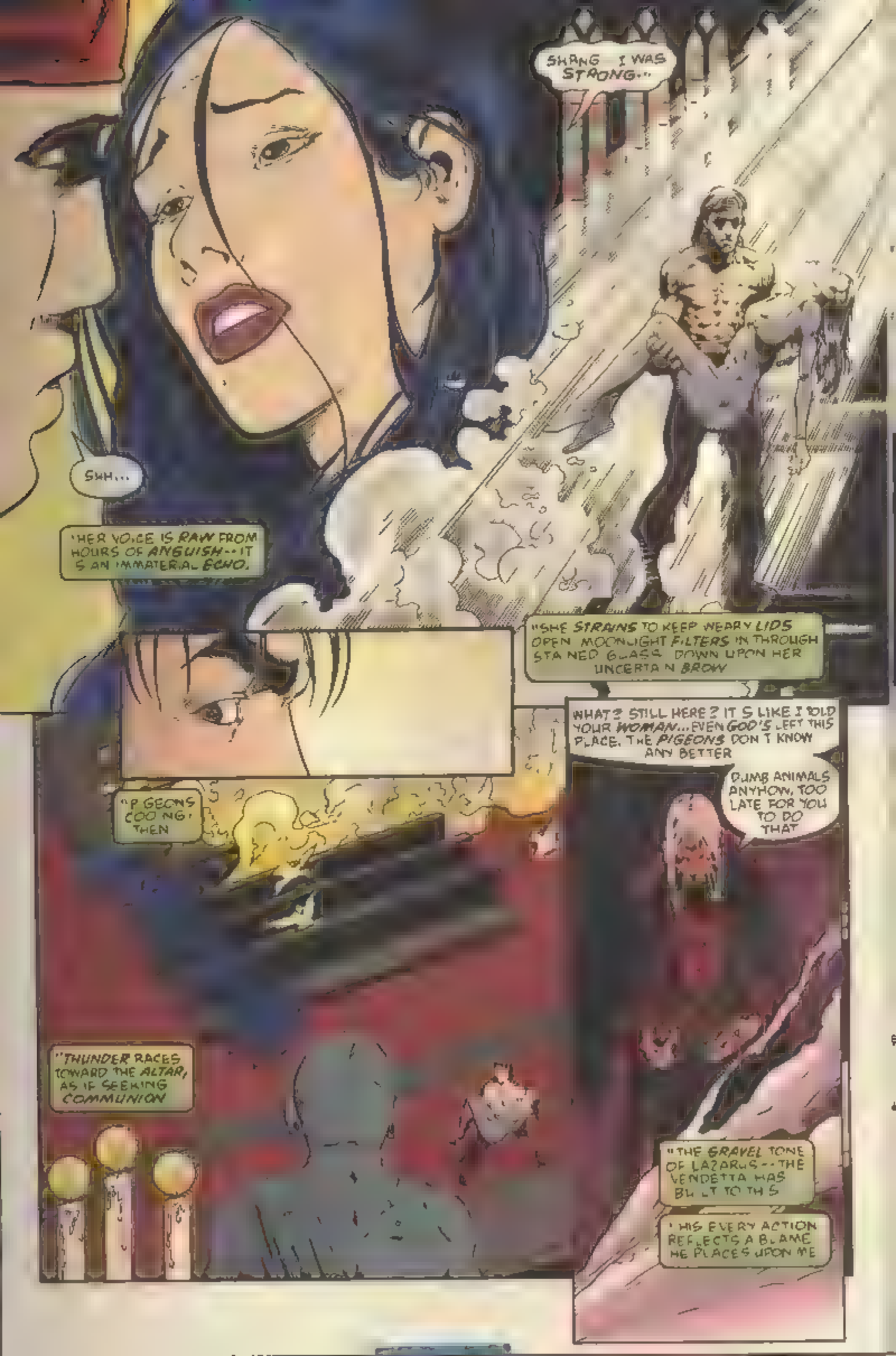
D'DN'T THE FORMER SPIRIT OF VENGEANCE GET ENOUGH THE FIRST TIME?
THOSE ARE PEOPLE YOU'RE MURDERING--THEY DIDN'T TRADE IN THEIR HUMANITY WHEN LIFE DEALT THEM A BUM HAND!
I SHOULD KNOW..
WHAT I DON'T KNOW IS HOW TO STOP PHANTOME! MAYBE I CAN TALK HER DOWN...
GARGANTUA TOLD ME YOU'RE NOT TRULY EVIL
GARGANTUA TALKS TOO MUCH
URK!
KRAK
BUT SOON, THAT WON'T BE YOUR PROBLEM
WAITAMINUTE-- IF ANYBODY KNOWS HELLFIRE, IT'S ME..
..AND THIS DOESN'T FEEL LIKE HELLFIRE! BUT THAT CAN ONLY MEAN--
FWOOOOSH
VENGEANCE IS REBORN!!!
WHAT? THIS ISN'T POSSIBLE! I STOLE YOUR POWERS!!! WE CAN'T BOTH BE SPIRITS OF VENGEANCE AT THE SAME TIME-- UNLESS...

UNLESS YOU NEVER REALLY STOLE MY POWERS IN THE FIRST PLACE.
DON'T YOU SEE? THE POWER WAS WITHIN YOU ALL ALONG! NOT TRUE HELLFIRE, NOT A TRUE SPIRIT OF VENGEANCE..
BUT A POWER THAT YOUR DEVICES AWAKENED AND CAUSED TO MIMIC MY OWN--AGHK!
THEN I'VE STILL GOT THE POWER TO DEFEAT YOU
I'M A FOOL--I BELIEVED MY POWERS WERE GONE, MAYBE WANTED THEM GONE, SO MY SUBCONSCIOUS BLOCKED ACCESS TO THEM UNTIL NOW!
I COULD'VE STOPPED ALL THIS SOONER-- BUT I'M GOING TO MAKE UP FOR THAT...
...BIG TIME!
KHOOM
THAT'S NO WAY TO TREAT A LADY...
...ESPECIALLY ONE WITH A FIERY WHIP!
KRAK
BOSS, NO!
THOSE FUEL CANNISTERS...!

KRAKOOM
ARE YOU SATISFIED YET, PHANTOME? IS THIS ENOUGH DESTRUCTION FOR YOU?
TAKE A GOOD LOOK AT YOUR HANDIWORK-- WHAT YOUR MADNESS HAS DONE!
NO!--
UUUNGH..

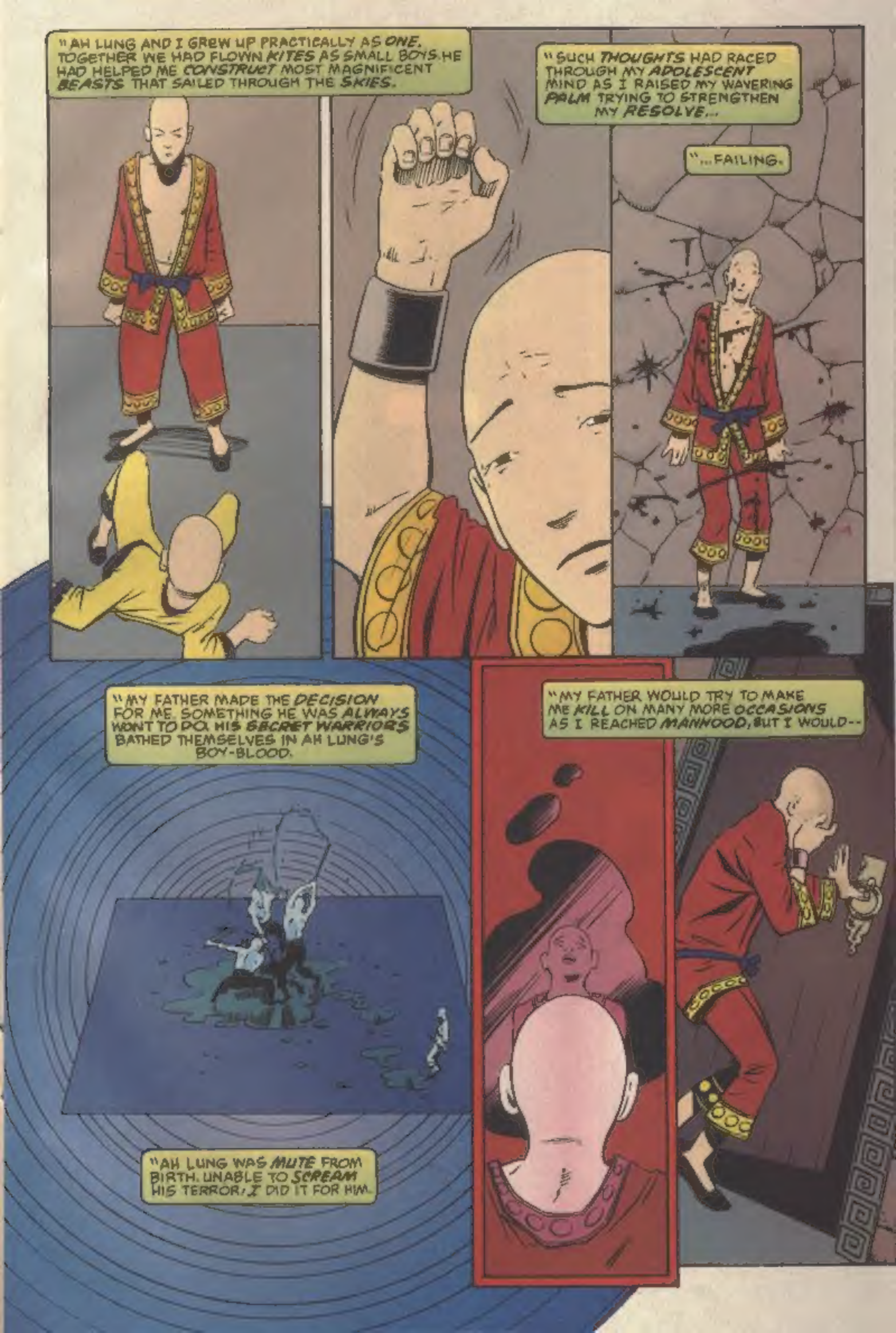
--GARGANTUA?!
I-I NEVER MEANT FOR...DIDN'T SET OUT TO HURT ANYONE...
..BUT GARGANTUA OF ALL PEOPLE.. OH, NO... NOT HIM...
NOT JUST GARGANTUA! LOOK AROUND YOU--
--AT THE HOMELESS PEOPLE-
TRAPPED ON A BURNING PIER...
.. SURROUNDED BY FUEL CANNISTERS... WITH NO HOPE OF ESCAPE!
TO BE CONCLUDED!


"I HAVE FOUGHT FOR MY LIFE TONIGHT
"BUT THE MAN SHE FACED EARLIER... THE MAN SHE FOUGHT... HE IS SICK.. UNSTOPPABLE RAGE. AGAINST HIM, THAT SPIRIT WAS TOO LITTLE
"WHEN I FIRST MET LEIKO, SHE WAS ALREADY A SKILLED MARKSMAN AND FORMIDABLE FIGHTER. IN THE YEARS SINCE WE HAVE GROWN CLOSE, I'VE OBSERVED THAT SKILL AND ITS BLOSSOMING.
"WHEN I RETURNED HOME TONIGHT, OUR FLAT WAS IN RUIN, BUT LEIKO'S KIDNAPPER, A KILLER FROM MY PAST, LEFT A CALLING CARD..
"...LEADING ME ON A ROUTE LADEN WITH WAYSIDE KILLERS AND NEAR FATALITIES, ALL BRINGING ME HERE
"YES I HAVE FOUGHT FOR MY LIFE TONIGHT, .
"...AND MORE.
MORTAL
THE GAUNTLET
Act II


SHANG I WAS STRONG...
SHH...
'HER VOICE IS RAW FROM HOURS OF ANGUISH--IT S AN IMMATERIAL ECHO.
"SHE STRAINS TO KEEP WEARY LIDS OPEN MOONLIGHT FILTERS IN THROUGH STA NED GLASS DOWN UPON HER UNCERTA N BROW
WHAT? STILL HERE? IT S LIKE I TOLD YOUR WOMAN...EVEN GOD'S LEFT THIS PLACE. THE PIGEONS DON T KNOW ANY BETTER
DUMB ANIMALS ANYHOW, TOO LATE FOR YOU TO DO THAT
"P GEONS COO NG' THEN
"THUNDER RACES TOWARD THE ALTAR, AS IF SEEKING COMMUNION
"THE GRAVEL TONE OF LAZARUS--THE VENDETTA HAS BU LT TO TH S
' HIS EVERY ACTION REFLECTS A BLAME HE PLACES UPON ME

I'M GOING TO GIVE YOU ONE OF TWO CHOICES...
THE FIRST IS YOUR SURRENDER AND MS. WU'S LIBERATION..
..THE SECOND IS A BULLET FOR THE BOTH OF YOU. I'D ADVISE THE FIRST.
HOW DO I KNOW YOU WILL KEEP YOUR WORD? YOU HAVE BROKEN IT ONCE ALREADY.
THIS IS HOLY GROUND, "MASTER", IT'S DEVOID OF MANY THINGS... BUT THE TRUTH ISN'T ONE OF 'EM.
COME ON... DON'T YOU WANT TO BE A MARTYR?

"MY OPPONENT PRESSES HIS ADVANTAGE BEFORE I CAN ATTACK.
'LAZARUS' DART FLOODS MY SYSTEM WITH POISONS... THEN AND THEN.
NIGHT, NIGHT
"I AM A BOY IN MY FATHER'S HONAN, CHINA RETREAT A DISTANT PAST I DO NOT CARE TO RECALL
" MY FIRST PHYSICAL COMBAT TOURNAMENT EVEN THEN I DID NOT SEE THE BLATANT EVIL I WAS BORN INTO.
"AH LUNG WAS NEVER A FIGHTER I HAVE ALWAYS CONSIDERED HIS BEING A PART OF MY FATHER'S WORLD TO BE A TRAGEDY.
"HE WAS THE EASIEST AND MOST DIFFICULT CHALLENGE I HAVE EVER FACED
MY SON, YOU HAVE HONORED YOUR BIRTHRIGHT AND HERITAGE. LIFE IS A GAUNTLET WE ALL TRAVEL, LITTLE ONE
I NEVER ACT WITHOUT REASON. THIS IS NO ORDINARY CHALLENGE, MY SON... IT IS A TEST OF STRENGTH AH LUNG HAS DISGRACED ME WITH PETTY THIEVERY.
ELIMINATE THAT WEAKNESS AND YOU WILL HAVE LEAPT YOUR FIRST HURDLE.
FATHER, AH LUNG HAS LOST IN COMBAT BUT--
FINISH HIM!


"AH LUNG AND I GREW UP PRACTICALLY AS ONE. TOGETHER WE HAD FLOWN KITES AS SMALL BOYS. HE HAD HELPED ME CONSTRUCT MOST MAGNIFICENT BEASTS THAT SAILED THROUGH THE SKIES.
"SUCH THOUGHTS HAD RACED THROUGH MY ADOLESCENT MIND AS I RAISED MY WAVERING PALM TRYING TO STRENGTHEN MY RESOLVE...
"...FAILING.
"MY FATHER MADE THE DECISION FOR ME. SOMETHING HE WAS ALWAYS WONT TO DO. HIS SECRET WARRIORS BATHED THEMSELVES IN AH LUNG'S BOY-BLOOD.
"MY FATHER WOULD TRY TO MAKE ME KILL ON MANY MORE OCCASIONS AS I REACHED MANHOOD, BUT I WOULD--
"AH LUNG WAS MUTE FROM BIRTH. UNABLE TO SCREAM HIS TERROR. I DID IT FOR HIM.

"--ALWAYS--
"--FALL--
"--SHORT.

YOUR LOVER'S HEART HAS STOPPED BEATING, MS. WU. IT SEEMS HE WASN'T ABLE TO WITHSTAND MY CRUDE SHOCK TREATMENTS AS WELL AS YOU.
SO SORRY.
ZEITGEIST
HE WAS A GREAT MAN. THIS... "MASTER".
I WONDER WHAT THEY'LL SAY ABOUT YOU.
KCHINK
NO.
NOOO!

"THEN IT IS OVER.

"THE *SILENT SHOUT* IS IN THE HIGHER *SPECTRUM* OF MY ABILITIES. I DRAW ON RESOURCES OF ENERGY NECESSARY TO THE TASK.

"IT WILL LEAVE ME *MUTE* FOR DAYS, BUT IT HAS *DEFEATED* LAZARUS.

"MY FOE'S GAUNTLET WAS MORE THAN *SUFFICIENT* TO KILL AN OPPONENT-- WELL-PLANNED. *GRACIOUSLY* ENGINEERED.

"WHAT LAZARUS DID *NOT* UNDERSTAND IS THAT I HAVE BEEN RUNNING THE GAUNTLET MY *ENTIRE* LIFE.

"ALLOWING HIM TO *LIVE* TONIGHT WAS ANOTHER *HURDLE* ON MY PART.

"THERE *WILL* BE MORE."

PELL

The End.